



MINUTES

BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

February 15, 2017 at 2:30 P.M. in City Hall, Rm. 303

Present:

Commissioner Jeffery Roman, Chair
Commissioner Sheila Ashley
Commissioner Tony Snell
Commissioner Mayhoua Moua
Sharon Robinson, Dept. of Administration
Jessica Langill, Dept. of Administration
Ben Roovers, City Attorney's Office
Rebecca Rabatin, DOA Budget & Management
Adam Wickersham, Legislative Reference Bureau
Syd Robinson, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center

Absent: Commissioner Marquette Baylor

Commissioner Chez Ordonez
Commissioner Aldira Aldape

The meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m. by Commissioner Roman.

1. Approval of minutes from January 18, 2017 meeting

Commissioner Snell moved to approve the meeting minutes from the January 18, 2017 meeting. Commissioner Moua seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

Commissioner Snell requested follow up on the additional information from Mark Nicolini about the budget timeline and budget cuts. Jessica Langill stated she would follow up with Mark and request the information for the next meeting.

2. Ordinance Rewrite Update/Outreach Plan

Commissioner Roman stated that there has been a sub-committee meeting to work on the ordinance rewrite. Commissioner Snell stated that Adam Wickersham from the Legislative Reference Bureau had taken on rewriting the ordinance with feedback from Ben Roovers (City Attorney's Office). He stated that a draft would be available within two weeks. Mr. Wickersham stated that the ERC Ordinance was far too long. Mr. Wickersham said he would leave out the day-to-day workings of the ERC and would cut other sections that were redundant or unnecessary. He also let the Commissioners know that the ERC had internal and external subpoena power by state law. Mr. Wickersham brought up the fact that there are no protections for the transgender community in the current ordinance and that he would write those protections into the rewrite. He stated that under the new ordinance the ERC could focus on outreach, investigation, and internal compliance, and that the ERC would give the Mayor's Office

and Council an Annual Report. Mr. Wickersham stated that it would be best to not talk specifically about housing and employment protections, but to leave it open so that the protections in the ordinance would cover any form of discrimination against the listed protected classes.

Mr. Wickersham stated that he would leave it up to the Commission to decide what protected classes would be listed in the ordinance rewrite. He brought up additional protected classes he found in other city ordinances. Commissioner Snell asked if Mr. Wickersham would put together a list of protected classes that could be discussed at the next ordinance rewrite meeting. Mr. Wickersham stated that the more protected classes put into the ordinance, the harder it may be to get a majority vote from the Council (especially for groups of people the Council may have never heard of). Mr. Wickersham stated the protected classes would be defined in the ordinance.

Commissioner Snell stated that the ordinance rewrite would also cover those with differing abilities. Rebecca Rabatin thanked Commissioner Snell for attending the ADA Training and stated that all city employees who have regular contact with the public will be required to take the training.

Ms. Robinson stated that there had been discussion at the sub-committee meeting about beefing up the penalties listed in the ordinance for non-compliance and about adding two more Commissioners to the ERC. Ben Roovers brought up the question of the enforcement mechanism for the penalties and Mr. Wickersham stated he would research the enforcement mechanism and would let the sub-committee know what he found at the next meeting.

Commissioner Roman stated he would start reaching out to the Council and letting them know about the rewrite. Ms. Robinson stated he should reach out to the Council in order of: Council President, Judiciary Chair, the rest of the Judiciary members, and the remaining Council members. Ms. Robinson stated that the ERC should shoot for getting the Judiciary Chair to author the ordinance. Ms. Robinson stated Commissioner Roman should reach out as soon as possible and start meeting with the Alders. Commissioner Roman stated he would start setting up the meetings and would let the other Commissioners know who he was meeting with so at least one other Commissioner could join in on the meetings. Ms. Robinson stated she could request that Commissioner Roman present at the cabinet meeting in March or April to give an update.

Commissioner Roman asked what it would take to get an equal rights Cabinet level position and to build equal rights infrastructure in Milwaukee. Ms. Robinson talked about Milwaukee's budget constraints and diminishing aid makes it extremely unlikely. She stated there may be opportunities to build and grow in the future over a period of time. She stressed the importance of building relationships within the city departments. Commissioner Ashley stated the ERC should stop comparing themselves to Madison

based on the major ideological and political differences in Milwaukee vs. Madison. She stated there were many conservatives holding political seats in Milwaukee.

Mr. Wickersham stated he would let Ms. Langill know when the ordinance rewrite was completed and then Ms. Langill would schedule a sub-committee meeting before the next full Commission meeting. At that time the full Commission will be updated on the draft and progress of the rewrite.

3. Human Rights Day

Commissioner Snell stated himself, Commissioner Mayhoua and Ms. Langill had met to begin planning the ERC's Human Rights Day event. He stated Milwaukee County's Human Rights Commission had appointed one of their Commissioners to work with the planning team and that the event was scheduled for December 8th in the City Hall rotunda. He stated various organizations would be invited to set up tables and do presentations throughout the day and that cultures and food would be shared. Commissioner Snell also stated that the planning team hoped the ERC and the County's HRC would present awards to members of the community and that the Mayor's office would issue Proclamations. Commissioner Snell stated the next step would be another planning meeting with the county Commissioner and then there would be a presentation to the Commissions and discussion about the award process. Ms. Robinson asked if there was a budget and Commissioner Snell stated the planning team had hoped there would be very little cost to the ERC as community organizations would donate their time and resources to the event. A discussion about advertising and outreach occurred including talk of social media, emails, community papers, the use of the City Channel, a promo video, the City's PR team, etc. Ms. Robinson stated the planning team should consider involving the City's Youth Council as well.

4. Hmong National Development Conference Sponsorship and NCRC Funding

Commissioner Moua stated the Hmong National Development Conference was coming to Milwaukee April 21-23 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. She stated that the ERC had sponsored events in the past and that it may make sense for the ERC to sponsor a table at this conference. Ms. Moua stated that the table sponsorship price was extremely high but that there could be other ways the ERC could be involved.

Commissioner Roman asked if there was a way to host an event at City Hall the day before the conference to welcome people to Milwaukee. Ms. Robinson stated that there could be a public welcome at the event but that the ERC would have to reach out to the conference's planning committee. Commissioner Snell stated this was a great way to reach out to the Hmong community and let them know about the ERC. Commissioner Ashley asked if there was a way to partner with Visit Milwaukee for a table but Commissioner Snell stated Visit Milwaukee would most likely not have a table.

Commissioner Moua stated she would find out more information about ways for the ERC to be involved once she talked with the planning committee again.

Commissioner Roman stated that it would be good for the ERC to sponsor a table and find a way to partner for the opening reception. There was discussion about marketing materials and the old banner and pens. Commissioner Moua stated that the ERC could share a table with her organization so they could the non-profit rate for the table.

Commissioner Roman stated the Milwaukee Fair Housing Council had invited him to attend the upcoming National Community Reinvestment Conference in DC and that Ms. Langill would be attending as well to represent the city's CDBG department. Commissioner Ashley stated that the conference would be very relevant and that it would be good for Commissioner Roman and Ms. Langill to attend. Commissioner Roman stated that his registration fee and up to \$650 traveling expenses would be covered by the Milwaukee Fair Housing Council but that he may still need some additional funding to attend. Commissioner Snell motioned for the ERC to cover remaining expenses up to \$1500 for Commissioner Roman to attend the NCRC conference. Commissioner Ashley seconded the motion. Commissioner Roman stated he would let the Commission know how much his remaining expenses came out to.

5. Commissioner Business Cards

Commissioner Snell stated it was important for the ERC Commissioners to have business cards when out in the community. Commissioner Roman stated that the older Commissioners already have business cards but that the newer Commissioners should get cards. After discussion it was realized that the old business cards had incorrect information so all Commissioners would need cards. Ms. Langill stated she would do some pricing and find the cheapest option.

6. Statement from ERC

Ms. Langill asked the Commissioners if they wanted to put together a formal statement of support that could be put on the website about immigration, Milwaukee being a sanctuary county, and about other issues happening with the new Administration. Commissioner Roman stated that the statement could tie together the ERC's support for those being affected by what's going on nationally and the need for the ordinance rewrite. Ms. Robinson stated that a statement about the ordinance rewrite would have to be sent out after the Council was made aware of the rewrite. Ms. Langill stated she would put together the draft of the statement and bring it back to the Commission after Commissioner Roman's outreach to the Council.

7. Future ERC Meetings in the Community

Commissioner Roman stated the March ERC meeting would be held at City Hall and that the first Community listening meeting would be held at the LGBT Center in April. Commissioner Snell stated that he and Ms. Langill would be meeting with Shelley Gregory from the LGBT Center and Michael Munson from Forge to discuss logistics of the listening session. He stated that he would bring any concerns or updates to the next commission meeting. Commissioner Roman asked what the vision was for the event and Commissioner Snell stated it would be a listening session more than anything else. He stated that after any ERC business was discussed that Shelley and Michael would lead a community discussion. Commissioner Roman suggested there be a discussion about the ordinance rewrite including community feedback.

Commissioner Snell stated he has been talking to Patricia Ruiz-Cantu and Rebecca Rabatin about opportunities for future listening sessions in other communities. Ms. Rabatin stated the ADA community had already requested a listening session. Commissioner Roman stated that it would make sense to hold a listening session in a different community every quarter. Commissioner Roman stated that once there was a draft of the new ordinance that the commission could talk about a way to engage the community in feedback, which would be separate from the listening sessions. Ms. Langill stated a public notice and invite would be sent out. The Commissioners and ADA Coordinator would reach out to their contacts about the event.

8. Community Dialogue / Events

Commissioner Roman reminded the Commissioners to attend the Mayor's State of the City Address on March 6th at the Harley University Center. Ms. Langill reminded everyone to RSVP. She also announced the LGBT forum being hosted at Alverno College on February 16th, the UWM Drag Show on the 18th at 7pm at the Milwaukee Theater, the LGBT Summit on the 25th (that Jessica, Jeff, and Tony will be attending), the Black History Month program being put on by the Council at City Hall on February 24th at 2pm, and the LGBT Resource Fair being put on by the LGBT Chamber of Commerce on February 21st from 5:30-7:30. Commissioner Ashley asked Ms. Langill to send out a list of events to the Commissioners. Commissioner Moua announced the Southeast Asian Health Fair on March 18th at the Holiday Inn. She said she would send a flyer to the Commissioners. Ms. Langill requested that the Commissioners keep her updated on any community events attended for future reporting. Commissioner Snell suggested that the Commissioners get a City ID to stand in solidarity.

9. Next Meeting is Monday, March 20th at 2:30pm

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

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jml